

THE COLEOPTERISTS SOCIETY, JAMAICA FIELD TRIP

BY J. H. FRANK, C. W. O'BRIEN, L. B. O'BRIEN, AND G. B. MARSHALL

Twelve collectors went to Jamaica, 4-9 December 1975, following the annual Society meeting in New Orleans. Howard Frank made the arrangements, and met us at the airport. After the formalities of customs, car rentals, and dinner in Kingston, the 3-car caravan slowly went up into the Blue Mountains in a pouring rain to a forestry camp at Clydesdale, arriving at 2 A.M. Despite the late arrival, everyone was up early; and after breakfast and some planning, we all went collecting in the rain. For 2 days and nights the rain persisted, but so did we; and evenings around the fire were very pleasant and all too short as we talked about beetles and collecting.

Clydesdale is a nursery and is planted mainly with pines and other introduced trees, so collecting there was somewhat limited. Therefore, we drove out or walked the mountain trails to find better natural habitats. Hardwar Gap was a favorite for all, but especially for the weevil collectors. Fresh-cut trails and areas for picnic shelters were attracting many weevils and other beetles. After 2 days of cold, wet weather, several of us went to the lowlands for a day in the sun. The Hellshire Hills near Kingston, an area of native thorn scrub and cactus (e.g., prickly pear, acacia, and mesquite), were rich in insects. That night in the mountains and the next day and night were dry, and collecting there improved accordingly. On the last day of collecting, one car went down to the north coast and the others revisited several areas.

Though some people had disappointing collecting, everyone had a fine time and considered the trip a great success. Wet conditions and the lack of sun reduced our success with berlese funnels. Without sun for heat, some of the berleses could not be used, and the wet litter did not allow good penetration of the tear gas used by others. We found the forestry camp arrangement excellent for collecting, though the Hardwar Gap area would probably be better as it is still natural. There is no electricity at the camp and we all were surprised at how little light one gets from candles and kerosene lamps. We all now have a deeper respect for Abraham Lincoln and others who studied by candle light. We were pleased with facilities at Clydesdale and were pleasantly surprised to learn that the shower had hot water. The kerosene refrigerator worked fine once filled and lit. Meals were cooked on the 2-burner gas stove; our 3 lady cooks earned the special thanks of everyone present for producing fabulous food with limited facilities, unfamiliar vegetables and recipes, and few spices. (Thanks also to Audrey Frank for menu suggestions using local commodities.) Food was more expensive than expected, about as in the U.S. Gasoline was very high, about \$1.25/ gallon. Fees for use of the camp were low, about \$.30 each/ day. Overall costs for the trip were really quite low (food, lodging, and car rental, \$62.60/ person).

Should anyone wish to rent either the facilities at Clydesdale or a cabin at Hardwar Gap, contact the Director of Forestry, Forest Department, 144 Constant Spring Road, Kingston, Jamaica, W.I.

Dr. Thomas Farr of the Science Museum of the Institute of Jamaica joined us for one day and night and gave us invaluable information on collecting sites and local botany. He recommends June, July, and August for peak beetle collecting.

Participants were George and Kay Ball, Henry and Milada Dybas, Wills Flowers, Howard Frank, Gary Hevel, Benn Marshall, Charles and Lois O'Brien, Elbert Sleeper, and Eric Yensen.